

Vedānta: Foundational Principles

BA Program

Course Category: Core

Schedule of Offering: 1st/3rd Semester

Course Credit Structure: 3 Credits

- **Lecture: 3 Hours per week**
- **Tutorial: None**
- **Practical: None**

Contact Hours per week: 3 Hours per week

Course Instructor : K.E. Gopala Desikan

1. Introduction

In our life, it can be observed that all actions we take are for our happiness alone. Whatever we may pursue, desire, or reject, it is only for the sake of our happiness. But we find that after pursuing all objects of our desires, and even gaining them, we are still not happy. If this is the case, what should our mode of living be? How should we live our lives, to be fully happy? Is this even possible? Many philosophies claiming to answer this question have come in and out of fashion since human society began. But the question still remains a mystery. Is there really a way to remain happy in life? The ancient Vedic śāstra called Vedānta can give us a new perspective on answering such questions. In this course, we inquire into Vedānta philosophy based on the teachings from two fundamental texts in Advaita Vedānta, *Tattva Bodha* and *Vedānta Sāra*. We will also include a comparative study on other branches of Vedānta philosophy, namely Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita.

2. Course Objectives

- To introduce fundamental concepts of Vedānta philosophy to the students
- To encourage a deeper engagement with life through the lens of Vedānta

3. Pre-requisites

As it is the core course, there are no prerequisites. Since the course is based on two Sanskrit texts, an intermediate level of Sanskrit proficiency is advisable.

4. Readings

- **Tattvabodha: Vedanta Book of Definitions.* Śaṅkarācārya, commentary by Swami Tejomayananda. Central Chinmaya Mission Trust: Mumbai, 2016.
- **Vedānta-sāra of Sadānanda.* Sadānanda Yogīndra, trans. and commentary by Swami Nikhilananda. Advaita Ashrama: Mayavati, 1931. 13th ed.
- *Yatīndramatadīpikā.* Śrīnivāsadāsa, trans. by Swami Adidevananda. Sri Ramakrishna Math: Madras, 2012.
- *Madhvasiddhāntasārah.* Padmanābhasūri, ed. by Ramacharya Malagi. Dvaita Vedanta Studies and Research Foundation: Bangalore, 2009.

5. Module-wise topics

Module 1 : General Introduction to Vedānta (2 sessions)

- What is Vedānta?
- Why study Vedānta?

Module 2 : *Tattvabodha* (7 sessions)

- Anubandha-catuṣṭaya
- Sādhana-catuṣṭaya
- Tattva-viveka
- Ātma-vicāra
- Māyā
- Guṇa-traya-vibhāga
- Jīva, Jagat, Īśvara
- Jīvan-mukti

Module 3 : *Vedāntasāra* (13 sessions)

- Definition of Vedānta
- Anubandha-catuṣṭaya
- Adhyāsa-vicāra
- Jīva-Brahma-aikya-vicāra
 - Pūrvapakṣa-nirūpaṇa

Module 4 : *Vedāntasāra Cont.* (9 sessions)

- Mahāvākyārtha-vicāra
- Vedānta-prakriyā
- Jīvanmukti-lakṣaṇa

Module 5 : Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta (8 sessions)

- **Prakṛti and Kāla**
- **Nityavibhūti**
- **Dharmabhūtajñānaṃ**
- **Jīva and Īśvara**
- **Adravya**

Module 6 : Dvaita Vedānta (6 sessions)

- **Dravya prakaraṇam**
- **Sṛṣṭisthitisamhāra prakaraṇam**
- **Jñāna prakaraṇam**

6. Pedagogy

This course will mostly consist of lectures based on the reading material. Some multimedia components are also included. The student is expected to participate actively in class.

7. Evaluation Pattern

Given below is the evaluation pattern.

- End-Sem exam: 70%
- Internal Assesment: 30%
 - Module Quiz - 12%
 - Presentation - 10%
 - Group Submission - 8%